

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 19 and which starts with "The conventional manufacturing process" with the following amended paragraph:

The conventional manufacturing process for a wooden hockey blade involves a large number of operations such as cutting, planing, sanding, laminating, bonding and finishing of the various wood pieces included in the blade. The blade may also be ~~recovering~~ covered with glass fibers or other composite reinforcement layers or braided glass socks. Curvature of the blade is obtained manually. Since the mechanical properties of the blade may change from one blade to another, even for the same type of wood, and since the curvature is obtained through a manual operation, it is almost impossible to manufacture wooden hockey blades for which the mechanical properties and the curvature are constant from one blade to another. With the composite hockey blade, it is however possible to manufacture hockey blades having specific mechanical properties and a specific curvature. One disadvantage of the composite hockey blade is that it does not offer a feeling similar to a wooden hockey blade. Indeed, it is recognized that a wooden hockey blade offers a better feeling ~~that~~ than a composite hockey blade since the feel of the ground (or ice) and the ball (or puck) is better dispersed in the wood.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 6 and which starts with "Hence, there is a demand for" with the following amended paragraph:

Hence, there is a demand for an improved hockey stick blade that offers the feeling of a wooden blade while ~~allowing having~~ being able to have specific mechanical properties and a specific curvature.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 28 and which starts with "Advantageously, the ground contacting portion" with the following amended paragraph:

~~Advantageously, the~~ The ground contacting portion ~~includes~~ may comprise a protective layer. The blade element comprises inner and outer surfaces extending from the front side of the wooden shank portion to the distal end of the blade element. Moreover, the blade portion comprises inner and outer puck engaging portions formed of inner and outer surfaces that are continuous with inner and outer sides.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 5 and which starts with "Furthermore, the blade portion also comprises" with the following amended paragraph:

Furthermore, the blade portion also comprises ~~an a first~~ inner layer ~~recovering~~ covering the inner puck engaging portion and ~~an a first~~ outer layer ~~recovering~~ covering the outer puck engaging portion, the first inner and outer layers being made of material having a higher rigidity than the blade element. The blade element is made of foam including fiberglass fibers while the first inner and outer layers are made of wood, glass fibers, carbon fibers, kevlar, aluminum, graphite or aramide or a combination of these materials.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 12 and which starts with "More advantageously, inner and outer layers" with the following amended paragraph:

~~More advantageously, inner and outer layers are first inner and outer layers, the~~ The blade portion may also ~~comprises~~ comprise second inner and outer layers ~~recovering~~ covering the first inner and outer layers respectively, the second inner and outer layers being made of woven materials.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 20 and which starts with "Referring to Figures 2, 3 and 5" with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to Figures 2, 3 and 5, blade portion 10 comprises a wooden shank portion 30 and a blade element 32. Wooden shank portion 30 comprises a longitudinal axis 34, inner and outer sides 36 and 38, and rear and front sides 40 and 42 between inner and outer sides 36 and 38. As illustrated in Figure 2, wooden shank portion 30 comprises a groove 44 on front side 42, with the groove 44 extends-extending along longitudinal axis 34. Wooden shank portion 30 also comprises a lower edge 46 extending from rear side 40 to front side 42.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 20 and which starts with "Referring to Figure 4" with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to Figure 4, blade portion 10 also comprises inner and outer layers 62 and 64. Inner layer 62 ~~recovers~~covers a portion 36A of inner ~~sides~~ side 36 of wooden shank portion 30 and inner surface 56 of blade element 32 while outer layer 64 ~~recovers~~covers a portion 36B of outer ~~sides~~ side 38 of wooden shank portion 30 and outer surface 58 of blade element 32. In fact, inner and outer layers 62, 64 ~~recover~~cover inner and outer puck engaging portions 14, 16 respectively.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 7 and which starts with "In order to increase the impact resistance" with the following amended paragraph:

In order to increase the impact resistance of the blade portion, inner layer 62 is thicker than outer layer 64. Indeed, the inner side of the curvature of blade portion 10, being the one that hits the puck more frequently; it is the one that must have a better impact resistance. In one embodiment, inner layer 62 is a unidirectional fiberglass sheet having

a thickness of 0.75 mm, a surface density of  $1375 \text{ g/m}^2$ -and a tensile strength of ~~7000 N/cm~~ 930 MPa while outer layer 64 is an unidirectional fiberglass sheet having a thickness of 0.35 mm, a surface density of  $635 \text{ g/m}^2$ -and a tensile strength of ~~3000 N/cm~~ 860 MPa.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 15 and which starts with "Advantageously, inner and outer layers 62 and 64" with the following amended paragraph:

~~Advantageously, inner~~ Inner and outer layers 62 and 64 are first inner and outer layers and blade portion 10 also comprises second inner and outer layers 66 and 68 that ~~recover respectively cover~~ first inner and outer layers 62 and 64 respectively. Second inner and outer layers 66 and 68 are made of woven materials such as glass fibers, carbon fibers, graphite, ~~carbon fibers~~, quartz fibers or a mixture of carbon fibers, of quartz fibers and of polyethylene fibers or a combination of these materials.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 22 and which starts with "It is understood that by selecting" with the following amended paragraph:

It is understood that by selecting a specific fiber architecture (fiber orientation relative to the longitudinal axis of the blade element) and ~~[[a]]~~ specific materials for first inner and outer layers 62, 64 and second inner and outer layers 66, 68, and by selecting a specific material for blade element 32, it is possible to obtain blade portion 10 having the desired mechanical properties. In that sense, it is possible to construct a blade portion having a weight, stiffness and strength adapted for different hockey players as it is now possible to construct a composite hockey stick shaft being flexible, medium stiff, stiff or very stiff. The hockey player will thus be able to select different combinations of hockey stick shafts and blade portions corresponding to his/her need. For example, a hockey player

who plays defense may select a flexible hockey stick shaft and a very stiff blade portion in order to increase velocity of his/her slap shoot.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 15 and which starts with "Similarly, since blade portion 10" with the following amended paragraph:

Similarly, since blade portion 10 comprises wooden shank portion 30 having inner and outer sides 36 and 38 that are part of inner and outer puck engaging portions 14 and 16, it offers a feeling similar to a blade portion entirely made of wood. It is understood that the feeling of the ground is dispersed to lower edge 46 even if it is ~~recovered~~covered with a thin layer of epoxy, of fiberglass or of other reinforcement materials. In fact, ground contacting portion 12 may comprise a protective layer made of epoxy, fiberglass or tape or a combination of these materials, such protective layer covering lower edge 46 and lower edge 60.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 4 and which starts with "Blade element 32 is then affixed" with the following amended paragraph:

Blade element 32 is then affixed to wooden shank portion 30 by inserting tongue 52 in groove 44. Before insertion, an adhesive bonding agent such as epoxy is put on tongue 52 and in groove 44. A portion of inner and outer sides 36 and 38 and inner and outer surfaces 56 and 58 are ~~recovered~~covered with first inner and outer layers 62 and 64 made of material such as wood, glass fibers, carbon fibers, kevlar, aluminum, graphite or ~~amid~~aramid or a combination of these materials. First inner and outer layers 62 and 64 are wetted before with a suitable bonding agent such as resin, epoxy or nylon. First inner and outer layers 62 and 64 are then ~~recovered~~covered with second inner and outer layers 66 and 68 made of woven materials such as glass fibers, carbon fibers, graphite, ~~carbon~~carbon fibers, quartz fibers or a mixture of carbon fibers, of quartz fibers and of polyethylene

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fibers or a combination of these materials. Again, second inner and outer layers 66 and 68 are wetted before with a suitable bonding agent.